DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 233 368 CS 207 784

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TITLE Men, Not Money: E. W. Scripps and the Penny Newspapers of the Pacific Northwest.
PUB DATE Aug 83
NOTE 34p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (66th, Corvallis, OR, August 6-9, 1983).
PUB TYPE Reports - General (140) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Change Agents; Journalism; *Mass Media Effects; *Newspapers; *News Reporting; *Political Socialization; Social Change; Social Responsibility; *United States History
IDENTIFIERS *Journalism History; Pacific Northwest; Progressive Era; *Scripps (E W)

ABSTRACT

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MEN, NOT MONEY

E. W. Scripps and the Penny Newspapers of the Pacific Northwest

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Presented to the History Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication in Corvallis, Oregon, August, 1983.

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ABSTRACT

E. W. Scripps' penny newspapers brought a new style of public service journalism to the Pacific Northwest's four largest cities--Seattle, Spokane, Tacoma and Portland--in the turbulent years of the Progressive revolution from 1899 to 1912. Minimal investment, tight cost controls and the idea that a small, condensed newspaper could be more popular than an advertising-laden large newspaper were the keys to the Scripps program. Coupled with these ideas was the concept of minority stock ownership for editors and business managers to provide an incentive to work for profitability in which these executives would share.

Scripps' editors waged a valiant fight to make his brand of public service journalism a success. They struggled for clean water supplies, food sanitation improvements, attacked street car monopolies and corrupt politicians, and risked court injunctions and libel suits. They produced profits for the Scripps Concern on smaller circulation and less advertising than their larger competitors.

But there were inherent conflicts between Scripps' ideal and the reality in print in the Star, the Press, the Times and the Daily News. Scripps' concepts demanded dedicated editors capable of great sacrifices, but the selection process produced men more interested in their stock profits. Expense controls resulted in distorted news coverage. On balance, an analysis shows not strong, local public service journalism but franchise newspapers with a uniformity foreshadowing the coming of national newspapers.

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MEN, NOT MONEY

E. W. Scripps and the Penny
Newspapers of the Pacific Northwest

To contemporary press critic Will Irwin, the Scripps newspapers in the first decade of the twentieth century were the work of "a genius at newspaper economies."[1] To George Putnam, who quit in disgust after a year as business manager/editor of the new Spokane Press, Scripps' methods meant a miserly salary, long range tyranny by Scripps and only a distant hope of reward as a minority shareholder in the Press.[2]

Most journalism historians like Irwin have limited themselves to noting with approval Scripps' innovations in newspaper management. They have also applauded his ideal of small newspapers capable of bringing to their communities honest, public service journalism on behalf of the common people. Scripps' biographers (Cochran and Gardner) as well as the editors of his Disquisitions (McCabe and Knight) have cast more light upon the complexity of the man than upon the operations of his newspapers.[3]

On analysis the four penny newspapers of the Pacific Northwest, a convenient regional cluster, reveal the wide gap between the Scripps ideal and the reality in print during the early years

of the twentieth century when Scripps himself was active in their management. The results:

--Minority stock ownership for editors attracted men more interested in their financial rewards than public service journalism. Nor did ownership prevent frequent personnel changes.

--Small newspapers, built on minimal investment, tightly controlled on operating expenses achieved some local public service goals. They were a force for national Progressive reform, also. Their greatest weakness was in State-house news and issues, and their narrow focus on local events.

--What emerges from this analysis is a picture of franchise journalism. Its success foreshadowed today's national newspapers (The Wall Street Journal, USA Today and others) rather than the local, independent newspaper that historians and Scripps' biographers have hailed.

The penny newspapers that bore the Scripps banner in the Pacific Northwest were established in the region's four largest cities, starting with the Seattle Star on February 26, 1899. The Spokane Press made its appearance November 7, 1902, the Tacoma Times followed on December 21, 1903 and the last of the Scripps papers in the Northwest made its debut as the Eastside News of Portland on September 24, 1906.[4] All were four-page, penny newspapers, born in boom communities and times when pennies were often treated with contempt. It was an era of overnight fortunes in timber, real estate and mining in the Pacific Northwest. Growth

in these four cities was dramatic. Seattle's population nearly tripled from 80,671 to 237,174 between 1900 and 1910; Portland grew from 90,425 to 207,214 in the same years. Meanwhile, the population growth at Spokane went from 36,488 to 90,000 and at Tacoma from 37,714 to 82,972.

It was also a decade of reform enthusiasm and political ferment. Initiative, referendum and recall were the catchwords of change. Graft, bribery, municipal ownership and utility franchises were the issues that dominated city politics. Primary elections, regulation of railroads and utilities and machine corruption were State-house topics. Nationally, the strident figure of President Theodore Roosevelt was a symbol of new political activism, and of an industrialized America from which rural life and traditions were disappearing.

In the first decade of the twentieth century, Edward W. Scripps towers among the leaders of American journalism much as do the tall Douglas firs of the Pacific Northwest where his four newspapers were established from 1899 to 1906. The motivations that brought Scripps to the Pacific Northwest newspaper field were several. Scripps, who made his home at Miramar Ranch near San Diego, started a series of new ventures on the Pacific Coast in 1892 with the purchase and merger of two struggling San Diego papers into the new San Diego Sun. In 1895 he founded the Los Angeles Record, and in 1896 bought the Kansas City World. Early in 1899, Scripps purchased and made over the short-lived San

Francisco Report. Clearly Scripps was interested in expansion.

The spark for expansion may well have been Scripps' obvious delight with new ideas and new inventions. He declared he was many times more interested in creating a new newspaper than he was in administering the growth of an established one.[5] There is evidence of more considered reasons as well. Scripps recognized that soaring costs had limited opportunities for new daily newspapers even at the turn of the century. He perceived the press of his time as owned by the rich, and largely controlled by advertisers--people who he saw as trying to get rich quickly. His penny newspapers were an experiment, he told Benjamin Ide Wheeler, President of the University of California. He wanted to demonstrate, he said, that newspapers could be started by a person of modest means "who had a message which the people want to hear, who is honest, industrious and possessed of ordinary business sense and a few hundred dollars or at most a few thousand."[6]

Scripps also wanted to extend his idea of public service journalism to new cities. He was firmly convinced that most other newspapers were so cowed by business interests and advertisers they could speak only for business conservatism. His newspapers flaunted their independence of the two major political parties, and carried the banner of municipal reform. They demanded effective regulation of railroads and utilities, and challenged judiciary at the risk of contempt rulings. Scripps' new news-

papers expanded his forum on national issues such as direct election of senators and an effective plan of Federal railroad regulation.

Like many Americans in the early 1900s, Scripps expected that most of America's economy would soon be controlled by three or four all-encompassing cartels. In a political climate which had yet to see effective anti-trust, transportation or banking regulation legislation, these fears seemed justified. He foresaw that the same concentration of ownership would bring all of America's newspapers together into "...four or five or six great newspaper leagues or associations spread all over the country."[7] Scripps hoped to anticipate the trend by starting first. "We will have had our period of experimentation," he told one of his editors, "before other publishers are prepared."[8]

In starting new newspapers, Scripps held the selection of the editor was all-important. This was true since the Scripps formula placed upon the editor's shoulders responsibility for news, local editorial policy and the acceptance or rejection of advertising.[9] Looking back upon his own career, Scripps identified precisely the traits of a successful editor. He should be young and unmarried. Lack of formal schooling was no liability and was probably an asset. A strong candidate should not have held a similar or lesser editorship elsewhere.[10] Scripps' criteria match exactly those of the young man who was the first editor of the Cleveland Press, Edward W. Scripps. The just-like-me school of

personnel selection has always existed! Scripps, however, by his own admission ignored his guidelines as often as not.[11] The editors who founded his Pacific Northwest newspapers stand as testimony to this contradiction.

Self-selection was essentially the means of choosing Scripps' Northwest editors. None of the founding editors of the Pacific Northwest came close to matching the profile Scripps described in retrospect. E. H. Wells, first editor of the Star, was neither young, nor single, nor unfamiliar with newspaper editorship. Wells was a telegraph editor on the Cincinnati Post in 1889 when he proposed to explore uncharted portions of Alaska for Scripps' newspapers. Scripps accepted his proposal, but Wells' Alaskan travels failed to reach any unexplored territory.[12] He returned to Alaska in 1890, leading an expedition sponsored by Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper. This time he succeeded in reaching uncharted areas and became lost. He and his party nearly starved to death before finding their way. He missed the last ship sailing from Alaska before winter froze the Bering Sea, and made his way south by dogsled and native canoe. When he reached Port Townsend on Puget Sound in May, 1891, he found himself reported lost and presumed dead in the interior of Alaska.[13]

In 1892 Wells became a traveling correspondent in Central America for Scripps' newspapers, and later was the editor of the Scripps' Kentucky Post at Covington, Kentucky. The Klondike Gold Rush in 1897 lured Wells back to the Northwest as a newspaper

correspondent and prospector. He returned through Seattle as an Army courier, and developed a quick appreciation of the potential of the Pacific Northwest.[14] The Seattle Wells saw in January, 1898, was a bustling city full of newcomers. It was exactly the kind of place that interested the expansion-minded Scripps. When Wells' plans for gold mining in Alaska failed to materialize, he proposed a new Seattle newspaper to Scripps but drew a negative response.[15] Scripps' partner in his Ohio newspapers, Milton A. McRae, agreed with Wells' appraisal of Seattle as a prime location for a new Scripps newspaper. McRae warned Scripps that Wells' age, 38, and his lack of business sense or good judgment made him a poor choice for the Seattle editorship.[16]

Wells persisted in his Seattle proposals to Scripps, and finally gained his agreement. In return for backing the new Seattle newspaper, however, Scripps demanded that his involvement be kept secret. If Wells lets the cat out of the bag, the deal was off at Wells' expense.[17] To reassure himself about Seattle, Scripps sent a secretary, Hamilton B. Clark, to make an evaluation for him. Clark was dazed at Seattle's booming growth. He could find only three vacant buildings for rent within a half-mile of the city's center.[18]

A similar pattern of self-selection and persistence brought George Putnam to Spokane in 1902 as editor of the Press, the second penny newspaper in the Pacific Northwest. Putnam was a civil engineering graduate of the University of Nebraska. He had worked

for the San Diego Water and Flume Company as a survey crewman. In the winter he was an advertising solicitor for the San Diego Sun. Scripps brought Putnam to his Miramar Ranch as his secretary in 1899-1900. In 1901 Putnam went to San Francisco to become Pacific Coast manager of the Scripps-McRae News Service, then the wire news service for Scripps' newspapers.[19]

Within the "Concern"--a word Scripps used to refer to his varied newspaper and wire service interests--expansion was in the air. Putnam had ambitions to become a Scripps editor. In April, 1901, Putnam received a $2500 pledge from Ellen Browning Scripps, Scripps' sister, to be used for the purchase of the Berkeley Gazette.[20] Before he could act, however, another buyer put up $3000.[21] Putnam suggested starting a new paper in San Francisco or buying the San Francisco Post.[22] Scripps said "No." In January, 1902, Putnam asked for Scripps' help in buying a Walla Walla newspaper, and again was turned down. Portland looked like a better possibility, Scripps said.[23] In July, 1902, Scripps finally agreed to another Putnam idea, this time a newspaper in Spokane. Scripps asked Putnam to put together a complete plan, and listed the conditions Putnam would have to meet before the project could go forward.[24]

Again, persistence and self-selection had chosen a Scripps editor rather than the profile Scripps listed later. Putnam was single, but the sole support of a sister and widowed mother. He was a university graduate, and he had managed the wire service

office in San Francisco for Scripps.

The editorship of the Times was determined more by events than a selection plan. Wells had been warned by Scripps when he became editor of the Star that his tenure would have to end in two years because of his advanced age. However, at the end of two and one-half years, Wells refused to step down. He appealed to Scripps, and went to Miramar to argue his case personally.[25]

Scripps was suffering from a periodic bout of illness, and declined to enforce the earlier understanding. In July, 1902, the Star business manager, Edwin F. Chase, asked Wells to resign his editorship. Scripps agreed with Chase, but decided to keep Wells available when an opportunity for a new Pacific Northwest newspaper appeared. Wells was not allowed to sell his Star stock, and was given a monthly allowance to supplement the $1800 in Star dividends he received.[26]

Wells proposed to Scripps a new Tacoma newspaper in March, 1903. He would like 51% of the stock, Wells said, and he thought he could raise $40,000 from "steamship interests."[27] The Tacoma project simmered throughout the summer of 1903. Wells repeated his proposals. The steamship interests had vanished, but he now hinted that others were looking at Tacoma as a newspaper prospect. When Milton McRae visited the Pacific Northwest newspapers for Scripps in September, 1903, he spent a day with Wells in Tacoma.[28] In October Scripps resolved the financial questions which had delayed Tacoma, and Wells was chosen to found another Scripps

newspaper. "The Tacoma Times was born today. The delivery of the infant was a difficult affair but the father is doing well," Wells wrote to Scripps on December 21, 1903, enclosing a copy of the first issue.[29]

Portland's Daily News, the last member of the Scripps Pacific Northwest group, was founded in 1906, a year which saw the Concern establish or buy six other newspapers. The decision to start or buy a newspaper in Portland was made by Scripps and his advisors at a Miramar meeting February 1, 1905.[30] Earlier Scripps tried to buy the Portland Journal. Perhaps the failure of those negotiations was the reason Scripps put a cloak of secrecy around the Portland plans. "I have especially designated one city where a new paper must be started very quickly. The name of this city is not to be known to anyone--not even my secretaries--in order to prevent all possibility of the ownership of the newspaper being recognized. While the new paper may have the N.E.A. report, it is not to have the Scripps News Ass'n report. In all correspondence it will be designated as "Columbia".[31]

In August, 1906, Thomas J. Dillon, city editor of the Star, and Melvin Voorhees, Star advertising manager, were offered the opportunity to start a new newspaper for Scripps in the undesignated city. They could not tell friends or relatives their whereabouts. They would not know their destination until it was time to buy their tickets. Minutes before their departure, Dillon and Voorhees were given an envelope containing minute details for their newspaper,

and told to go to Portland where a $15,000 bank letter of credit awaited them.[32] Later Scripps cryptically referred to the Portland paper as an experiment for its first six months, but never made clear the nature of the experiment.[33] Dillon no more matched the Scripps profile for new editors than had his predecessors, Wells and Putnam.

The selection of Scripps' founding editors simply does not agree with his later recollections of ideal candidates. If there was a single dominant trait of the founding Pacific Northwest editors, it was persistence. It was a persistence fueled by the stock plan dangled before those willing to accept Scripps' terms for establishing a new Scripps newspaper. For Wells at the Star the reward was 15% ownership; for Putnam at the Press it was 25% ownership. There were similar rewards awaiting Wells at the Times and Dillon and Voorhees at the Daily News. In each instance, however, Scripps retained 51% of the stock and full control. Still, minority ownership in a profitable newspaper as the partner of E. W. Scripps, already a millionaire several times over, was an enticing prospect for low-paid newspapermen.

As the financial backer of the new Northwest newspapers, Scripps set the terms, the conditions and the goals under which his new editors would fail or succeed. They were, in Scripps' words,

--"A small paper...on the theory a small paper is more profitable because it is more popular."[34]

--"Save all of that money that other publishers waste on ...having fine offices, expensive plants."[35]

--"...the interests of your paper, and hence of yourselves, as stockholders, will be served by making your expenses the lowest possible."[36]

--"...we did not run our papers for fun but for profit."[37]

--"...the new paper is to be the advocate and special pleader of the laboring and poor classes against the whole plutocratic and aristocratic combinations, political, economic, and social."[38]

Scripps' terms meant four-page newspapers selling for a penny, founded on the scantiest of capital investment and pushed to profitability by tight-fisted control of all expenses. Each of the Northwest newspapers was started on a scale similar to that in Spokane. This included a used press and a single linotype machine. Scripps set the start-up costs for the Press at $12,140. He limited Putnam's salary to $12 a week, the same pay he had received as editor of the Cleveland Press in 1878. Scripps sweetened the contract with some incentives for his new editor. For every $240 Putnam exceeded the target investment figure of $12,140 he would lose 1% of his promised 25% stock ownership; for every dollar under the target figure he would receive a $3 bonus.[39] Putnam lost since he exceeded the start-up allowance.[40] The Star's initial investment was $34,400 and the Times was $16,666.[41]

Investment could be minimal since Scripps believed in a

small, four-page newspaper with a fervor approaching fanaticism. A dispute over the number of pages caused him to shut down the San Francisco Report when its management disagreed with his four-page idea. He fought with Wells at the Star over the same question. The issue of four pages versus eight led to Putnam's quitting at Spokane almost a year to the day of his founding the Press. The four-page newspaper idea, Scripps wrote, "has been founded on the correct appreciation of the fact that very industrious men had small time to read papers and that very indolent people the graet [sic] majority of people--are not fond of reading, hence we founded our papers on the theory that nearly everybody wanted to know what was happening--that nearly everybody was a lover of gossip--and that they wanted to learn these things with as little labor as possible."[42] Scripps clung to this concept even as editors disagreed or disobeyed his rule. "The newspapers are to be small four pagers, not only in the beginning, but in perpetuity,"[43] he wrote in 1906 when the Star was consistently running eight pages as advertising required. The Star also lengthened the pages to expand the space available.

From the start expenses were controlled with an iron fist. Scripps asked for the lowest possible rents. He recommended real estate dealers be told his representatives were looking for a laundry location after he found this uncovered lower-priced buildings and land.[44] When Putnam agreed to pay $50 a month rent to house the Press, Scripps warned him against reckless extravagance as a

new editor.[45] Salaries were held down to starvation levels. Wells arranged a $5 a week loan from Scripps to make ends meet for his wife and daughter when he founded the Star. At the Daily News Dillon's pay was so small he carried his wife on the payroll as a part-time bookkeeper at $3 a week.[46] An absolute Scripps rule barred free copies of newspapers to anyone under any conditions.[47] Free tickets were accepted and distributed to employees as partial compensation.[48]

Nationwide economic conditions led Scripps to demand even more stringent cost controls. Such a downturn occurred in 1899 shortly before the first issue of the Star appeared. Scripps ordered all newspapers to cut costs. He ordered no money be spent for lunches, ice, towels, soap and toilet paper except as actually needed.[49] One of the Star's early advertisers cancelled the contract when refused a free copy of the newspaper containing his advertisement.[50] Chase, the Star's business manager, said they were "down to waste baskets and window panes," and unable to solicit new advertisers without sample copies.[51] The Panic of 1907 brought another wave of economies. Chase and Wells, now responsible for all four Pacific Northwest newspapers, were warned they could easily cut expenses by 10% at both the Seattle and Tacoma newspapers.[52] "You think this little wetness we have had is only a thundershower. God, man, it's a tidal wave! Wake up! Get a move on. Cut expenses everywhere."[53]

Scripps believed a small newspaper could show profits as

readily as a large one. If an editor "couldn't reach a 15% profit on $2,000 receipts, I feel you will never be able to make a profit on any volume of business you may receive."[54] The incentive was, of course, that editors shared in profits as part owners. At Spokane Scripps followed his 5% management plan, an option that was not implemented at the other Northwest newspapers. This meant that the editor and business manager could pay themselves salaries totaling "a sum equal to five per cent of the gross receipts so long as the net cash divisible profits shall equal or exceed fifteen per cent of the gross receipts."[55]

The Star was an early success. McRae said that four years after its founding the Star was worth three or four times its start-up costs.[56] At the end of 1908, a five-year summary of Star results showed:

YEAR	CIRCULATION	INCOME	NET INCOME
1904	17,292	$ 90,000	$ 12,500
1905	17,778	102,000	15,200
1906	23,529	135,000	23,200
1907	24,416	170,000	(2,200)
1908	26,657	168,000	17,000

(Fire destroyed the Star April 21, 1907. The expense of a new building and equipment was charged against Star profits for 1907 and 1908 since the Scripps newspapers were self-insured.)[57]

James G. Scripps, now in training as his father's successor on the business side, predicted the Star would become "eventually our largest and most profitable newspaper."[58]

At the Press, Putnam was showing profits and a 2648 daily average circulation by March, 1903, five months after the newspaper's start.[59] Clouds gathered over the Press a few months later, and its profitability was never consistent. The Times and the Daily News were slower and more erratic in their profits. Summing up the Northwest results for 1909, Scripps estimated the Star's return at 17%, the Press at 15%, the Times at 15% and the loss from the Daily News at less than $1,000 a month.[60]

Penny newspaper news policies reflected the limitations of a small newspaper. Here the paradox of public service journalism and financial reality became evident. Scripps urged his editors to use N.E.A. feature material. Three-fourths of the daily news space should be filled by N.E.A., and the remaining one-fourth divided between Scripps News Association wire news and local news. Condensation was the Scripps byword for both local and wire news. "Get all the local news, but get it in the shortest items possible; cover the ground for the readers with the least possible effort on their part in reading the news."[61] Another Scripps idea linked to condensation was a belief that newspapers sold best when they contained 300 to 400 separate and distinct news items rather than one-third or one-fourth as many news items longer or better written.[62] "Never," he ordered Star editor Wells, "permit the publication...of any reference to illegitimate sexual intercourse or any such item which a mother would not be willing to fully explain to a pure-minded daughter."[63] "The object of Scripps newspapers should always

be the public welfare," Scripps repeatedly told his editors. "The wealthy can take care of themselves. We should devote our efforts ...to aiding the great majority and wage earner [sic]."[64]

There were inescapable contradictions between Scripps' announced principles of public service journalism and their practice in the Pacific Northwest newspapers. However, the watchful eye of Scripps was always upon the straying editor via daily copies sent to him. His visits to the Northwest were rare, and conferences with editors infrequent. Still, there was a remarkable similarity of content and appearance among the four newspapers. Page one was always a collection of Scripps News Association startlers. Favorites were railroad accidents, political graft or corruption, foreign wars and revolutions, kidnapped or lost children and bizarre murders and suicides. Two or three local page one stories was a good daily average. Crime was usually featured. However, when a penny newspaper discovered a local cause, it received total support. Headlines two and three deep ran on page one day after day. News stories interpreted events from the perspective of the Scripps editorial commitment.

The penny newspapers occasionally approached Scripps' goal of 300 to 400 individual news stories in a single issue.[65] They did this by cramming 50 to 60 news stories on page one. Headlines often occupied more space than one-sentence stories. Headlines, if not sensational, were provocative. Those who died in fires were "roasted." A murderer executed by hanging was headlined

"Swings Off Game." "Walks the Streets" told the reform school sentence of a 15-year-old girl. Question headlines were frequently used. "Will City Solons Knuckle Again to Water Power Co.?" the Spokane Press asked over a report on a street car franchise. "How About It, Mr. Manning?" the Daily News demanded over a story of the District Attorney's inactivity in a bank failure. When the usual local news ran dry, a roundup of spicy divorce actions met the Scripps criteria of news of "exceeding interest."[66] Northwest editors never reported illegitimate sexual intercourse, but covered the topic through countless euphemisms.

The inside pages (page two and page three) were the heart of Scripps' public service journalism. Most of these pages were filled with N.E.A. features. Some of it was traditional feature grist: bizarre murders, escapades of the wealthy, stories on stage personalities and romantic episodes of European nobility. But intermingled with this froth was the hard core of Progressive reform ideas. There were articles on initiative and referendum, and the recall of judges; the workmen's compensation issue; the railroad accident toll; the ten-hour day for women and labor's right to organize. By-liners included the legendary labor organizer, Mother Jones; Governor Hiram Johnson, the California Progressive leader; Tom Johnson, the reform mayor of Cleveland; Representative Miles Poindexter, the insurgent Republican from Spokane and Governor Joseph Folk of Missouri, the nemesis of machine politicians in his state.

Editorials also appeared on page two. They were far less activist than the features with which they shared space. Generally, they were essays on an event or personality in the midwest or east. The N.E.A. staff was located in Cleveland, and its interests were somewhat provincial. For short periods local editorials would displace those from the N.E.A., and then disappear again. An exception to the rule was the Daily News under Dana Sleeth's editorship. His powerhouse editorials ran consistently and acrimoniously. He had been on the job less than four months when he faced his first indictment for criminal libel.[67]

Page four was a catch-all of local re-writes and wire service news which didn't make it elsewhere.

On local news the Scripps formula imposed constraints of space and staff that gave the penny newspapers a narrow scope. The issues changed only slightly from city to city. Whether it was the Star, the Press, the Times or the Daily News, the questions were: pure domestic water supplies; milk and food sanitation; public utility service and franchises; police bribery and protection of vice; municipal power ownership; street car service and accidents. Since Wells was successively editor of the Star and the Times, and then General Editorial Director of all four newspapers, the similarities of news content and treatment are understandable. Scripps maintained his own direct involvement in news and editorial matters until 1911 when his second son, John, was given that responsibility. James, Scripps' oldest son, assumed business management of the Pacific

Coast newspapers in 1908.

The limiting of Scripps' local news coverage to one or two issues increased the impact by lifting these stories out of the mainstream for singular attention. It was a strength of the Scripps Northwest newspapers that they pursued these stories with a crusading fervor. The Press' 1904 series on employment agencies recruiting "girls" for mining camp dance halls and bawdy houses led to Federal action against four agencies and at least one conviction. The Press also had to defend itself successfully against a libel suit arising out of the series.[68]

The Times fought for a clean-up of the city's water supply system. Editor Wells made it plain under a page one banner on September 3, 1904: "Filthy and Poisonous Is Tacoma's Water Supply."[69] He completely broke Scripps' rules by using the entire page one for his story and photographs of the pollution sources that his opposition was ignoring.

In Portland, Sleeth of the Daily News was persistent in his campaign against the Portland Railway, Light and Power Company, the local street car system. He used page one standing heads such as "Rotten Service" and "Daily Street Car Victims" to attack the company's indifference to its customers and safety. His page one banners "Shall Trust Kill or Maim at Will?" and "How Long Shall We Be Ground Up?" asked questions that demanded answers.[70]

Of the Star's many campaigns none ended more successfully than the fight against Federal Judge C. H. Hanford. Hanford

claimed the Star and its editors were obstructing justice by their defiance of his injunction on behalf of a Seattle street car company. He asked Star's editors be indicted for organizing a mass meeting calling for his impeachment. A Federal grand jury declined to act. A Congressional sub-committee in Seattle was probing Hanford's conduct in July, 1912, when Judge Hanford suddenly submitted his resignation to President William Taft.[71]

Public service journalism was one of Scripps' two major goals for his Northwest newspapers, and they accomplished much in this regard. But the business innovations which made possible this challenge had their unintended as well as intended effects. The incentive of stock ownership produced editors chosen by self-selection and persistence more than any other factor. They were men as much interested in the prospect of wealth as in the Progressive political agenda.

Putnam, founding editor of the Press, drifted into an early financial dispute with Scripps. The final break concerned Putnam's determination to increase Press receipts and dependence upon advertising through an expansion to eight pages. Scripps was equally determined the Press would remain four pages. At heart the issue between them was money. Putnam's miserly salary and Scripps' insistence that the Press' profitability be built on a slow, steady basis embittered Putnam. Scripps accused Putnam of wanting to get rich fast.[72] In his letter of resignation, Putnam complained that "The best of my vitality goes to build up a property for you, and

I get a salary insufficient to pay half of my expenses." Putnam also objected to the "rules, red-tape regulations and suspicion. Besides, I have no right to ask those dependent upon me to endure further privations and hardships."[73]

Scripps' parting with Wells, founder of the Star and the Times and later General Editorial Director of the Northwest newspapers, also involved money. Wells began borrowing from Scripps at a rate of $5 a week when the Star was founded in 1899. The borrowing continued over the years. Early in 1908, Scripps realized that Wells was $28,000 in debt to him. Wells also owed $13,000 to four banks as well as five individuals. The implications of a Scripps editor deeply in debt to local bankers shocked Scripps and Robert F. Paine, whom Scripps gave editorial supervision over all Scripps papers nationwide. Paine accused Wells of trading on his position as editor to get loans. "In these times and in your particular territory mere suspicion is enough to damn," Paine wrote Wells.[74] Wells was forced into a stringent financial program to repay Scripps and the banks.[75] Within a year he was eased out of the Concern entirely. Dillon at the Daily News quit as editor over his inadequate salary after two years. His wife threatened to divorce him because of his low pay.[76]

The insistence on profits and day-to-day penny-pinching had its unintended results as well. When Scripps ordered his 1899 curtailment of all expenses, including "toilet paper" as actually needed, his directive was followed literally.[77] Newsprint was soon

clogging sewer pipes, and plumbing repair costs soared.[78] Low pay may have been one cause of the 1905 blackmail by an editor and a police reporter at the Star.[79]

The narrow scope of local news coverage mentioned earlier had its unintended effect upon Scripps' public service goals. There were stories about graft at city hall, corruption in the police department and angry cries about the plutocrats who controlled the street car system. There was always room for philandering husbands or erring wives or murderers that illustrated the "unwritten law." It was obviously a distorted picture of the community. Compared against the 12 to 24-page papers of Scripps' competitors, the tunnel vision of the news was evident.

Another news disadvantage faced by the Scripps newspapers was their lack of first rate state capital news coverage. This resulted from the dependence on part-time correspondents at Olympia and Salem since no Scripps newspapers were located in these cities to supply the Scripps News Association its coverage. Washington and Oregon legislative reports were brief or incomplete in comparison to the detailed reportage provided in other Seattle, Spokane, Tacoma and Portland newspapers competing withh Scripps' penny papers.

By the time of his 1911 retirement Scripps could see in the Northwest newspapers fulfillment of two major goals. They demonstrated that a small newspaper could be established on a modest financial base. Profitability was achieved in competition with the established large dailies. The editors of the penny newspapers

were producing public service journalism a la the Scripps formula. It was here the Scripps' vision faltered. The unintended effect of stringent expense controls resulted in the narrow scope of local news coverage, the weakness in State-house news and the hazards of underpaid and unscrupulous employees making the newspapers a vehicle for blackmail.

Perhaps the most apt analogy for the Scripps Northwest newspapers is that of modern franchise marketing. Scripps provided the start-up capital and gave his franchisees a tested formula for turning out a successful penny newspaper. Like McDonald's or Postal Instant Press, Scripps supplied the majority of the ingredients--the N.E.A. features and the Scripps News Association service which filled more than 75% of the news space. The results were a uniform product that furthered his reform ideas locally, and extended the reach of the national Progressive agenda. Scripps recognized where uniformity led. "I have no idea of establishing a lot of independent segregated newspapers. I mean to establish one great newspaper, parts of which shall be locally conducted and groups of which shall cooperate sectionally. It was with this end in view, this sectional cooperative scheme, that I established the Northwestern territory..."[80]

There was another unintended effect in the Scripps scenario. Smallness was successful, but it demanded sacrifice in exchange for the promise of a future reward of the men who became editors of the penny newspapers of the Pacific Northwest. Scripps summed it up

when he explained his financial policy made it "...necessary for the men to make the paper instead of money."[81] Finding men capable of these sacrifices failed with self-selection. Nor would any system of selection have been able to find editors who matched the Scripps mold. There was only one E. W. Scripps.

NOTES

1. Will Irwin, "The American Newspaper," Colliers Weekly, Vol. XLVII, No. 10 (May 27, 1911), p. 16.

2. George Putnam Collection, University of Oregon Library, Eugene, Oregon, GeorgePutnam to E. W. Scripps, November 2, 1903.

3. Scripps' biographers: E. W. Scripps, Negley D. Cochran, Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York, 1933; Lusty Scripps, Gilson Gardner, Vanguard Press, New York, 1932; Scripps' writings or disquisitions: I Protest, Oliver Knight, ed., University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1966; Damned Old Crank, Charles McCabe, ed., Harper and Brothers, New York, 1951.

4. All four Scripps Northwest newspapers have ceased publication. Seattle Star, 1947; Spokane Press, 1939; Tacoma Times, 1949 Portland Daily News, 1939.

5. Oliver Knight, ed. I Protest, Selected Disquisitions of E. W. Scripps, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966), p. 302.

6. Vance H. Trimble Collection drawn from the archives of the E. W. Scripps Trust, Cincinnati, Ohio. E. W. Scripps to Benjamin Ide Wheeler, May, 1906.

7. Ellen Browning Scripps Collection, Ella Strong Dennison Library, Scripps College, Claremont, California. E. W. Scripps to E. H. Wells, October 31, 1906.

8. Ibid.

9. E. W. Scripps to all editors, January 31, 1907.

10. Knight, p. 249.

11. Ibid.

12. Seattle Post-Intelligencer, Second Section, December 12, 1908, p. 1.

13. E. H. Wells, "Our Alaska Expedition," Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, Vol. LXXIL, No. 1868 (July 4, 1891), p. 378.

14. E. H. Wells, Compilation of Narratives of Exploration in Alaska, 56th Congress, First Session, Senate Report 1023, 1900, p. 513.

15. Milton McRae to E. H. Wells, August 16, 1898.

16. Milton McRae to E. W. Scripps, August 16, 1898.

17. E. W. Scripps to E. H. Wells, November 28, 1898.

18. H. B. Clark to E. W. Scripps, December 27, 1898.

19. George S. Turnbull, An Oregon Crusader, (Portland, Oregon: Binfords and Mort, 1955), p. xii.

20. Ellen B. Scripps to George Putnam, April 21, 1901.

21. George Putnam to Ellen B. Scripps, May 18, 1901.

22. George Putnam to E. W. Scripps, November 28, 1901.

23. E. W. Scripps to Ellen B. Scripps, January 31, 1902.

24. E. W. Scripps to George Putnam, July 12, 1902.

25. E. H. Wells to E. W. Scripps, September 30, 1901.

26. L. T. Atwood to E. W. Scripps, November 6, 1902.

27. E. H. Wells to E. W. Scripps, March 4, 1903.

28. Milton McRae to E. W. Scripps, September 28, 1903.

29. E. H. Wells to E. W. Scripps, December 21, 1903.

30. E. W. Scripps, Notes of Miramar Meeting, February 1, 1905.

31. E. W. Scripps, Diary Notes, July 24, 1906.

32. George S. Turnbull, History of Oregon Newspapers, (Portland, Oregon: Binfords and Mort, 1939), p. 194.

33. E. W. Scripps to James G. Scripps, January 31, 1908.

34. E. W. Scripps, Ellen B. Scripps and George Putnam, Agreement to establish a Spokane newspaper, August 17, 1902.

35 E. W. Scripps to George A. Gohen, January 19, 1899.

36. E. W. Scripps, Notes of Miramar Meeting, January 31, 1907.

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38. E. W. Scripps, Ellen B. Scripps, George Putnam Agreement, August 17, 1902.

39. George Putnam to L. T. Atwood, August 18, 1902.

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48. E. W. Scripps to George Putnam, August 17, 1902.
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57. C. F. Mosher to J. C. Harper and W. B. Colver, December 24, 1908.
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70. Portland Daily News, September 5, 1908, p. 1.
71. Seattle Star, July 22, 1912, p. 1.
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73. George Putnam to E. W. Scripps, November 2, 1903.
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